



MALI

U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)
Population, Health, and Nutrition Briefing Sheet

Country Profile

Mali is a landlocked Sahelian country with a per capita income of \$250 and a population of 9.5 million. It has a natural resource-based economy where cotton, livestock, and cereals predominate. Socioeconomic indicators put Mali's living standards among the worst in the world, with an infant mortality rate of 123 deaths per 1,000 births, a literacy rate of just 19 percent, and a primary school enrollment rate of 42 percent. In the 1990s, Mali embarked upon an ambitious path of social, economic, and political liberalization and development. In 1996, Mali was the first African country visited by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, who called Mali "an oasis of freedom, a champion of good governance, and a model for Africa."

Mali's chief development constraints include a rapidly growing population, two-thirds of which is less than 25 years old, a fragile natural resource environment, and limited capacity of community-level organizations to play effective roles as partners in establishing a decentralized government.

USAID Strategy

USAID's portfolio is specifically designed to build Malian capacity to reduce the country's future dependence on foreign aid for social and economic development. USAID's health sector efforts are integrated with education assistance under a unified objective that focuses on improved social and economic behaviors among Malian youth. USAID's program fully supports the Malian government's new 10-year plans for health and education, which were developed with USAID collaboration, and is complemented by further activities in economic development, information and communication, and democracy and governance.

Major Program Areas

Young Adult Reproductive Health Services: Family Planning. USAID supports a variety of efforts to improve access to, quality of, and demand for reproductive health services for young adults and adolescents. A central strategic priority is to increase availability of

contraceptives through community-based distribution (CBD) and social marketing. USAID is promoting public-private partnerships to ensure contraceptive availability and exploring the possibility of expanding CBD and family planning services through private voluntary organizations (PVOs).

Young Adult Reproductive Health Services: HIV/AIDS and STI Prevention and Control. USAID's program is designed to improve prevention of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) through behavior change communication, condom distribution, and improved STI case management. Nonformal sector outreach programs address peer counseling, youth centers, family life, and school-based service delivery.

Expansion of Child Survival Activities. USAID supports the extension of the Ministry of Health's "Minimum Package of Activities" through training and organizational capacity-building at the community level, strengthening information systems, and advocacy and operations research to improve public sector child survival interventions. In the private sector, support to the Child Survival Pivot Group, a national consortium of nongovernmental organizations, and to participants in USAID's PVO Co-Financing Project, serves to strengthen vaccination services, prenatal and maternity care, family planning, and treatment of sick children and adults.

Results

- There is increased use of modern methods of contraception, from 1.3 percent of women of reproductive age in 1987, to 5.0 percent in 1996.
- There is increased access to child survival and other essential health services. Nationwide, the percentage of the population within 15 kilometers of a child survival service delivery point increased from 28 percent in 1996 to 35 percent in 1997. In areas where USAID supports PVO projects, 50 percent of the target population of 1.9 million now has access to health services.



Bureau for Africa

U.S. Agency for
International Development

1300 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Washington, DC
20523-3600

Tel: 202-712-0540
Fax: 202-216-3046

E-mail:
africawb@rrs.cdie.org
Website:
www.info.usaid.gov/regions/afr

- Collaborative development of:
 - A 10-year national health plan;
 - National strategies and action plans for training and information, education, and communication (IEC) programs;
 - Norms and procedures for integrated management of childhood illnesses (IMCI);
 - Reproductive health norms and procedures for community health centers and CBD agents; and
 - Preservice reproductive health training curricula.

Success Stories

Operating in a country where modern family planning is only beginning to find acceptability, USAID's social marketing program has rapidly expanded both the quantity and variety of contraceptives available to Malians. Highlights in 1997 include sales increases of 26 percent for oral contraceptives and 32 percent for condoms, and the successful launching of a socially marketed injectable contraceptive. The number of nontraditional sales points surpassed 10,000 locations in 1997, ensuring a wide alternative service network available to adolescents and young adults.

USAID support is designed to help local community organizations develop the capacity to provide sustainable and effective health and family planning services. One beneficiary of this support, ASACO, a grassroots community health association in Kolondieba District, has created a credit fund to finance transport for emergency obstetrical care, thus greatly facilitating access to this highly specialized yet essential safe motherhood service. In 1997, 100 women benefited from this service.

Continuing Challenges

Despite the significant progress made in encouraging family planning, the use of modern contraceptive methods is still below that needed to reduce population growth meaningfully. Similarly, despite noteworthy improvements in infant and child health and reproductive health, immunization coverage remains low, nutritional status appears to be declining, malaria remains an important cause of infant and child deaths, and increasing levels of STIs and AIDS are challenging traditional health care financing systems. The Malian government's commitment to decentralized health care delivery requires continued support and strengthening at all levels.

Mali's health sector policies give communities the responsibility for health care delivery and management. Consequently, USAID is targeting a large part of its assistance directly to communities. New activities will be built on innovative public-private partnerships to respond to the high levels of unmet demand among youth for reproductive and child survival services. Because Mali's extremely low school enrollment and literacy levels are barriers to increasing access to and demand for these services, USAID is convinced that its investment in primary education, and particularly girls' education, will increase the impact of its child survival and reproductive health activities.



Bureau for Africa

U.S. Agency for
International Development

1300 Pennsylvania Ave, N.W.
Washington, DC
20523-3600

Tel: 202-712-0540
Fax: 202-216-3046

E-mail:
africawb@rrs.cdie.org

Website:
www.info.usaid.gov/regions/afr